

## **TMN – COT**

### **Board of Directors Meeting**

**Wednesday, September 1, 2010**

### **Conference Room – AgriLife Building**

**Attendees:** David Brandes, Laura Brandes, Mary Helen Israel, Justina Dent, Ed Barrios, Jerry Eppner, Jerry Krampota, Neal McLain, Sandy Henderson, Carolyn Schlein, Ed Johnson

#### **Safety or Naturalist Culture Moment**

Laura and Dave Brandes told of their observing a pair of cardinals in their back yard take in and raise a cowbird along with their young.

#### **Action Items**

Brazoria County Parks Department asked Dave for TMN assistance with BCPD Family Day at Hansen Riverside Park. TMN member Ruby Lewis has agreed to coordinate this event with James Glover, BCPD.

Richard Hurd, BCPD, has informed Dave that Brazoria County has received a grant to restore dune grass (50,000 plants) along Follets Island and will need assistance from volunteers on scheduled workdays from mid October to March.

#### **Environmental Education Committee (EEC)**

The existing modules are being set up into a common template format for consistency and ease of learning, instruction, and revising. The goal is to complete these by mid-October.

#### **Annual Meeting Display Topic**

Marty Cornell is developing the INEOS program display for the state meeting and will be taking more pictures during the September sessions.

## **Intern Curriculum Survey Results (Summary attached to Minutes)**

There was good participation on the survey. Laura's summarizations of the results were discussed by the board. Merits of the previous mandatory ten of twelve classes during a fixed-schedule twelve-week training period versus the flexible-schedule year-round training program were discussed. Many great benefits of the flexible program were revealed, however, because it requires so much continual time and attention by a Training Director the consensus was to transition back to the fixed-scheduled twelve weeks training. The decision of when to conduct the training and whether to have one or two sessions per year are still being evaluated.

Laura is developing a new Intern Handbook which will incorporate all the intern forms and information. She will assist a new director in transitioning back to the fixed-schedule program.

## **Nominating Committee**

Past president Ed Barrios will serve on the committee. Jerry Krampota and Neal McLain were nominated for the committee and a motion was made and passed for them to serve.

## **Electing Class Representatives for**

These elections will be held in November before the December officer elections.

## **Committee Reports**

Sandy Henderson reviewed the current balance.

Mary Helen Israel asked for all the input in order to prepare the September Newsletter this weekend.

Marty Cornell and Neal McLain will present a Dow Woods slide show at this September Member Meeting providing an update to members regarding work in progress and the plans for the immediate future, including needed volunteer opportunities.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

## ATTACHMENT

### "Pilot" intern Training Program 2009-2010 CONSIDERATIONS (by Laura Brandes) Page 1

**1. The Board needs to decide to**

**a) continue the "pilot" as the TMN-CoT training program**

**--OR--**

**b) transition to the previous program by January 1, 2011.** (In my opinion, January is a better start month as it avoids most vacation times, hurricanes and the holidays. The only conflict is Spring Break in March. (Also, we have gotten the largest number of enrollees at this time.)

**2. If the Board reverts to the former program then a NEW Training Director needs to be appointed immediately as an Assistant to the Director.** This person will need to organize the 2011 Training Calendar which will include Topics, Instructors, locations and reservations for Class and Field activities, refreshments, equipment, materials, etc.

Meanwhile, the current Training Director will complete the Fall 2010 Training Calendar with those Interns that are active. (Prospective Interns can either enroll in September or wait until January. All other prospects will be put into the 2011 program.) On December 31, 2010 the current Training Director will step down; on January 1, 2011 the new Training Director will take over and the Interns will transfer ALL of their hours to the 2011 program and commence with the 2011 Training Schedule.

**3. If the Board decides to continue the "pilot" program then the current Training Director will continue in that capacity WITH AN ASSISTANT TRAINING DIRECTOR.** The Assistant will work with the Director during Fall 2010 to "learn the ropes" with the responsibility of the intake of the Interns, sending out information when requested, assisting with the development of materials for the Topics and implementation of the Training schedule.

The Training Director will expand the "**Orientation**" section to at least one hour (i.e. Intern Training for Dummies) which will allow more time to review and explain the training program details and opportunities. The "**Introduction**" will be reduced to two(2) hours with use of the "Cliff notes" and outside reading of the eleven (11) chapters covered during this time. An "open book" quiz will be used to insure that the State Curriculum has been read, and will be due within 1-2 weeks following the "Introduction" session. This is more than ample to cover the four (4) hours of required Class time.

A **pre-class reading "assignment"** on each topic from the State Curriculum with the understanding that this is BASIC BACKGROUND information and that the mid-Gulf Coast is the focus of attention during the Class and Field activities. The Intern will be required to take an

"open book" quiz on each topic/class not to exceed one page, OR write a one-page narrative on what the Intern learned that was new to them.

The Training Director will transition the Intern Packet information to an **"Intern Handbook"** and work with the Instructors to **develop the 2011 Calendar to a day/field, Saturday with field and evening with separate Field.** Each Instructor will be asked to do **two(2) classes per year** alternating with day/field or Saturday/field, and/or evening/separate field.

The Training Director will recruit Instructors and Assistants. Modules will be developed for those topics that we currently do not cover (ex. Ichthyology, Urban Ecology). Whenever possible the modules developed by the EEC will be used. Hand-outs will be developed for EACH Topic in conjunction with those used by the Instructor. (The Interns love handouts.)

An attempt will be made to further define the Training Schedule and Content.

The Field Activities are not appropriate to on-line experience; however, there is a wealth of events that can be used as alternatives (ex. Christmas Bird Counts, activities at Migration Celebration, etc.). The TMN-CoT should take advantage of every opportunity including General Meeting AT, environmental events, project activities (i.e. invasive plant survey of Dow Woods), other adjacent Chapters training and non-TMN events (i.e. Armand Bayou Nature Center "Native Gardening" program). Also, the Instructors need to provide more hands-on activities during the field work (ex. taking proper photos to identify plants or trees, plotting the flora and fauna of a specific measured area).

The TMN-CoT needs to be pro-active in getting the Interns involved with our activities at the start of the training. The Members need to attract the Interns to activities such as Dow Woods, the Environmental Education Committee, DEEP, etc. Most of them are too shy/"green" to approach an unknown person and volunteer for something that is not well-defined or well-explained.)

**Parameters** need to be set for the possibility that an Intern is just "not with it". (How many phone calls, emails, etc. does the TMN-CoT send without getting a response? Or, how many classes are unattended without just cause? Or, how do we handle the person with no computer/email resources?) The criteria should apply to both those who have and have not paid their tuition. A letter from the President should be sent explaining this action to the "dropped" Intern which includes re-activation instructions.

**When the Assistant is comfortable with the program then the Training Director will resign and the Assistant will fill the vacancy.** It is recommended that this be a two-year position

allowing for the appointment of a 2nd person in the 2nd year who then will become the Director.

4. **For the FUTURE**, the Board should consider

a) The Board needs to appoint a Member who is qualified to develop **CDs for each topic** in lieu of an Instructor's class. A fee should be charged for the disk so that the Intern takes "ownership" in the topic.

b) The Board needs to **appoint a Public Relations Chairman** whose task is just that--public relations. This means that a Directory of publications with a contact person is developed. The rules for articles and pictures are defined. There is an on-going and consistent effort to publicize the TMN-CoT.

c) The Board needs to develop a **Brochure Distribution** program that involves every TMN-CoT Member. Mailings to friends, new retirees, etc. should be considered as well as specific locations (i.e. Academy Sports, the County Libraries